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Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space

August 6, 2009

DURHAM, N.H. - Two University of New Hampshire energy efficiency programs - the New Hampshire Carbon Challenge and Carbon Solutions New England - have been awarded more than \$953,000 from the New Hampshire Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Fund (GHGERF) to further their efforts.

The New Hampshire Carbon Challenge (NHCC), a joint initiative of UNH and Clean Air-Cool Planet (CA-CP), received a two-year, \$813,402 grant and will partner with the New Hampshire Sustainable Energy Association (NHSEA) to develop energy-efficiency, web-based tools that homeowners can use to reduce their energy usage.

Carbon Solutions New England (CSNE), a UNH-based public-private partnership designed to promote collective action to achieve a clean, secure energy future, secured \$139,945 for one year to track, analyze, and report on projects funded by the GHGERF.

The grant was made through the Public Utilities Commission as part of the emissions reductions fund, which are monies raised through the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative or RGGI - the first mandatory, market-based effort in the United States to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. New Hampshire is among the ten Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic states that have committed to capping and reducing CO2 emissions from the power sector 10 percent by 2018.

"These programs represent a joint commitment by the state, Clean Air-Cool Planet, NHSEA, and the university to achieve the dual goals of giving consumers tools to monitor and control household energy use and reduce carbon emissions to the atmosphere," says David Bartlett, NHCC project director and research professor in the UNH Institute for the Study of Earth, Oceans, and Space.

The mainstay of the NHCC program is its web-based "New England Carbon Estimator" - a tool that allows homeowners to identify actions they can take to reduce energy consumption, costs, and greenhouse gas emissions. The new funds will allow the group, in association with the nonprofit NHSEA, to enhance the carbon estimator and create new web tools "we think households will find very useful in reducing their energy consumption," says NHCC co-founder Julia Dundorf.

The new tools being created include one that will help homeowners identify incentives and rebates they qualify for towards the purchase of energy efficient products. The web tool will also help them locate a vendor or contractor who can facilitate their energy-savings action.

Denise Blaha, also co-founder of NHCC, notes that a unique new tool will be one that partners homeowners wanting to implement renewable energy systems in their home with homeowners who have already installed these systems.

"One of the biggest ways you can inspire and encourage households to purchase these energy systems is to link them with those who already have these systems in place," Blaha says.

In May, the NHCC became a joint initiative of UNH and CA-CP under the expanded title, the Residential Carbon Challenge.

Says Adam Markham, chief executive officer of CA-CP, "This new collaboration allows us to deepen our work and our commitment with communities and individuals. We are thrilled to be bringing our respective resources together to deliver these much-needed tools for individual action through the New Hampshire Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Fund."

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students

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